



## Discover Your Wineries This Summer

Last Update: 6/26 11:13 am



(Andreas Rentz/Getty Images)

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Just six years after becoming a state in 1792, the first vineyard in Kentucky was planted and a new industry took off.

By the late 1800s, Kentucky was a leading wine producer in this country. Prohibition in the 1920s ended the state's wine production.

But the Bluegrass State is bouncing back with 46 wineries across the state that has opened in the last 15 years. Ten are growing grapes and have not begun selling wine.

Some of the vineyards are former tobacco farms whose owners are trying a new crop, according to Stacia Alford, grape and wine marketing specialist for the Department of Agriculture.

The Kentucky Grape and Wine Council recently sponsored four regional commercial Kentucky wine competitions and awarded medals to the top wines that used Kentucky-grown grapes. In August, the Kentucky State Fair will have its first commercial wine competition.

Wine drinkers seem to appreciate products that are grown nearby, Alford said. "The fact that they are purchasing a locally produced product seems to go over well."

And with the high gas prices, Alford said the wineries make for a great local attraction. "This is the perfect agritourism destination that for many is just a few minutes down the road."

The good news for tourists – regardless of their drinking preferences – is that they can see the wineries up close. Many wineries sell their wine, offer tours, and provide food and entertainment or other special events. The wineries also host weddings and parties.

As far as wine tasting, no experience is needed.

"We teach everybody in our wine tasting," said Lou Ann Robinson, manager at Chrisman Mill Vineyards in Nicholasville. Chrisman Mill is located just three miles from Kentucky's first vineyards developed by Jean Jacques Dufour, winemaker for the Marquis de Lafayette.

Chrisman Mill offers an eight-course Tuscan dinner July 18, and will be offering a Summer Steak and Shrimp Cookout July 19.

For more information, visit <http://www.chrismanmill.com/>.

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### Other winery events coming up in July include:

Smith Berry Winery in New Castle is hosting concerts July 12 (the Rigbys) and July 26 (Johnny Berry and the Outliers). Dinner is also served.

For information, visit [www.smithberrywinery.com](http://www.smithberrywinery.com).

Ruby Moon Winery in Henderson is hosting Australian singer and songwriter Martine Locke July 12.

For information visit <http://www.rubymoonwinery.com/>.

StoneBrook Winery in Camp Springs, near Cincinnati, will offer buffet dinners in its 1890 farmhouse July 12 and 26.

For information, visit <http://www.stonebrookwinery.com/>.

Equus Run Vineyards at Midway near Lexington presents the Sensations in concert July 12.

For information, visit <http://www.equusrunvineyards.com/>.

Talon Winery and Vineyards in Lexington will feature Zydeco Bon in concert July 11.

For information, visit <http://www.talonwine.com/>.

Elk Creek Vineyards at Owenton will host the Motown Revue and Fireworks Show July 5.

For information, visit <http://www.elkcreekvineyards.com/>.

For more information about all Kentucky wineries, visit [KentuckyWine.com](http://KentuckyWine.com).

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Kentucky Post

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